

## Intersections

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# From the Publisher

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## PURPOSE STATEMENT

This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Division for Higher Education and Schools of the ELCA. The publication presently has its home at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio which has generously offered leadership, physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the inauguration of the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators which have addressed the church - college/university partnership. Recently the ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College conference. The primary purpose of *INTERSECTIONS* is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- \* Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- \* Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- \* Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning and teaching
- \* Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives and learning priorities
- \* Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- \* Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- \* Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- \* Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

If someone did a word count of the articles that have been published in *INTERSECTIONS* from the very first issue until this one to see what this journal is all about, I feel confident that the word "vocation" would be among the top three. Vocation is a central concept for Lutherans, and this journal grew out of an effort to make it also a central concept at the colleges and universities that are related to the ELCA. Therefore, many leaders at those universities and colleges became excited when the Lilly Endowment, Inc. decided to start a major new initiative in the area of "Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation." They invited church related colleges and universities in the United States to submit grant proposals for programs that would help students examine the relationship between their faith and vocational choices, provide more opportunities for young people to explore ministry as their life's work, and enhance the college's capacity to prepare a new generation of leaders for church and society. It seemed like an initiative that was tailor-made for our institutions.

And sure enough, in the first round of competition two Lutheran colleges and universities received implementation grants, the next year three more colleges were successful, and last fall four Lutheran colleges and universities were selected as recipients of these grants. We extend warm congratulations to Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois; Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota; Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota; Luther College, Decorah, Iowa; Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington; St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota; Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana; and Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, for their successful development of plans to encourage vocational discernment among their students. These institutions will now receive grants from the Lilly Endowment of approximately two million dollars each over a five year period to accomplish the goals that they set out in their grant applications. An investment like that should have great benefits for the students from those colleges, and for the church.

These colleges already have an excellent track record of motivating their students to attend seminary and pursue church careers, maybe Lilly used that as a factor in their selection process. But it is important for institutions related to the ELCA to remember that we see just as much potential for callings to careers of vocational service if our students choose to become accountants, nurses, police officers or home makers. Since Lutherans believe in the "priesthood of all believers," we can use our talents to serve God and his creation to the utmost of our ability in any setting, and be leaders of our church and of society in any career.

Arne Selbyg  
Director, ELCA Colleges and Universities

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue continues the tradition of publishing some of the papers read at the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference. Curt Thompson's paper wrestles with a question I am sure many have asked and identifies a certain un-ease, "the Lutheran knot," as being essential to the Lutheran approach to things. Carol Gilbertson both examines and illustrates the creative dimensions of taking language seriously. She also shares with us some of her own poetic visions. Bruce Heggen talks about the way in which a theological vocabulary can inform the learning and teaching he sees at the state university where he works and the way "secular" students catch on to meaning-making and meditative thinking. The piece by Susan Poppe explores the boundaries of our own freedom and openness and poses some very challenging questions for her own and all of our institutions. Though I have quoted Sig Royspern's oracular gems many times, this is the first time I've had his permission to print them. Just when I think I have turned the last corner and surrounded his thoughts a new side appears in view.

I was very happy to receive the response from Robert Benne to two essays published in our last issue. I was happy because it was a sign that the issue was being read and because someone found the matters discussed there worth further consideration. Nothing would please me more than to have the pages of *Intersections* be the locus of a continuing conversation about issues that matter.

I consented to put my picture on the cover only after voicing several reservations. I do not want to advertise myself, nor do I wish to be publicly pictured without the proper dignity due to my station. In spite of the seriousness of these concerns the others here at the office were unrelenting. Blame them.

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